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Summary

In service of education

A study of Protestant pedagogical periodicals in the 19th century

Summary

This study is about Dutch Protestant pedagogical periodicals that appeared in the 19th century. It concerns nine weekly papers, four monthly magazines, three magazines published by societies, two newspapers and one periodical for future teachers.

For each periodical the history of its development, its global contents, its view of education and upbringing and its view of the teacher have been examined. Chapter 3 to 7 report the results for the previously mentioned five types of periodicals.

The preceding chapter 2 offers a survey of the most important events and developments in Dutch education in the 19th century. They are the context in which the pedagogical periodicals appeared. At the centre is the 'School Struggle' which dominated this period. This struggle ended in 1920 with public and denominational education getting equal rights from the Dutch government.

Chapter 8 summarises the results of the research. Two periods can be discerned. In the first period, from 1844 to 1873, periodicals struggled to survive. Due to a lack of subscribers most periodicals did not last long. This changed after 1873 because of the rapid rise of Protestant education. In this second period various magazines appeared (sometimes with changing names), even with weekly frequency.

The editors of the periodicals were serving as teachers and received virtually no allowance for their editorial activities. Most readers read the periodicals because of the educational news, which constituted their main content. The periodicals also paid attention to political developments with regard to education, but were virtually silent on theological topics. Initially there was much controversy between Protestant and liberal educational periodicals about the ideological character of education. The end of the 19th century showed a development from newspaper to professional journal.

The investigation of the view on education shows that within Protestantism the family was regarded as the most important place for education. The school provided an addition to this. Different views were held on the place of the church. Some regarded it a task of the church to found schools, others believed this to be a task of parents. The goal of education was the spiritual well-being of the child. To this end the Bible was seen as a reliable guide providing answers to both pedagogical and educational questions.

An important conclusion of this study is that Protestant education in the 19th century did not develop a peculiar pedagogical vision and did not distinguish itself on a conceptual level. However, in practice it showed a distinct profile which was mainly noticeable in the central place of the Bible and religion and in particular views on the

teacher's role. A teacher was expected to be a pious Christian who had to have pedagogical qualities. Some supposed such a teacher could and was allowed to be involved in ideological neutral education too. The work of a Christian teacher was seen as closely related to the ministry of a pastor, for it was his main task to mould the soul of a child. At the end of the 19th century this view lost ground when the work of Christian teachers was increasingly regarded as a profession which also required educational skills.

Apart from the teacher who through his attitude gave colour and direction to education, the Bible had a big impact on the subject-matter of tuition, manners and atmosphere of the Protestant school.